



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

At its meeting held April 29, 2003, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Molina made the following statement:

“With the cost of health care premiums rising, more people are joining the ranks of the uninsured. Those employers who pay for health coverage are capping their contributions to health insurance plans and employees are finding it difficult to pay their increasing premiums. In the United States, 30% of people under the age of 65 are uninsured. California’s uninsured rate is the fourth highest of all states in the nation at 36%, and Los Angeles County’s uninsured rate is 30% higher than California’s overall rate. Sadly, most people who lack health care insurance are connected to the workforce; 70% of the uninsured are employed. They are the working poor.

“As the recession persists and the unemployment rate rises, the uninsured population will continue to swell and will rely on Los Angeles County’s health care safety net. Declining revenues and increasing numbers of uninsured will continue to overwhelm our underfunded system.

“The uninsured have little or no access to preventive care and are less likely than insured adults to be screened for cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. They often must forgo timely medical treatment, delay seeking needed services, and inevitably rely on the emergency room for their care. This affects everyone because it limits access for all people and increases overall costs to the health care system.

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“The fundamental problem is that we treat health care as a ‘commodity’ and not as a right. One’s ability to receive health care should not be based on income, but rather on need. I am glad to see that legislators in Sacramento are willing to take leadership on this issue. Senator Sheila Kuehl has introduced Senate Bill 921, ‘The Healthcare for All Californians Act.’ This bill would provide health insurance coverage to all Californians through a single payer insurance plan offered by the State of California. This legislation is the best solution for protecting Los Angeles County’s health care system.”

Supervisor Molina also made the following statement:

“Existing law does not provide a system of health care coverage for all Californians and does not require employers to provide health care coverage for employees and dependents. And yet, we know that more than 80 percent of the uninsured are working people or their families. These are hardworking residents who go to work every day, pay taxes, and provide for their families, but their employers do not provide health insurance. Senate Bill 2, authored by Senators John Burton and Jackie Speier, would require employers to provide health care coverage for eligible employees and dependents, including prescription drug coverage. Employers could opt to pay a fee to the State to provide coverage and require employees to pay up to 20 percent of the cost of coverage. In Los Angeles County, we are well aware of the cost burden on local government to provide healthcare services to the uninsured. We should seek all reasonable legislative remedies to provide coverage for our residents.”

Sheila Hoff, Joanne Leavitt, representing the League of Women Voters, Doris Isolini Nelson, representing Health Care for All, Jim Hilfenhaus, representing Local 300 and Leonard Shapiro addressed the Board.

After discussion, on motion of Supervisor Molina, seconded by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, duly carried by the following vote: Ayes: Supervisors Molina, Yaroslavsky and Burke; Noes: Supervisors Knabe and Antonovich, the Board took the following actions:

1. Went on record in support of the following legislation:
 - a. SB 921 (Kuehl), legislation which would provide health insurance coverage to all Californians through a single payer insurance plan offered by the State;

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- b. SB 2 (Burton and Speier), legislation which would require employers to provide health care coverage for eligible employees and dependents, including prescription drug coverage, and employers could opt to pay a fee to the State to provide coverage and require employees to pay up to 20% of the cost of coverage; and
- 2. Instructed the Executive Officer of the Board to send a letter signed by the Board to Governor Davis, Senator Speier, Chair of the Senate Committee on Insurance and all Committee members, and the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation urging support of SB 921 and SB 2, and Senator John Burton urging support of SB 2.

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Copies distributed:

- Each Supervisor
- Chief Administrative Officer
- County Counsel
- Director of Health Services

Letters sent to:

- The Governor
- Senator Jackie Speier, Chair of the Senate Insurance Committee
- Each Member, Senate Committee on Insurance
- Each Member, Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
- Senator John Burton
- Senator Sheila Kuehl